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## FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMUNIST STRATEGY OF AGGRESSION

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USAWC RESEARCH ELEMENT  
(Essay)

Fundamental Principles of the Communist  
Strategy of Aggression

by

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## SUMMARY

Since the close of World War II, the concept of aggression has assumed an increasing role in the exercising of the Communist world's foreign policies and objectives. Aggression can take many forms and avoids specific definition. It is the purpose of this essay to investigate some basic fundamentals of the Soviet strategy of aggression in order to better understand its role in the international arena.

A review of Leninism indicates that there is good reason to believe that it is the basis for the Soviet concept of aggression. Lenin's philosophies toward wars, negotiations, the principle of association, peaceful coexistence, and national liberation movements are still valid and practiced in modern times. In applying Leninism to an analysis of Soviet strategy, it is important to realize that the world situations of today differ from those existing at the time Lenin developed his theories and concepts.

Although the Soviet stated attitudes toward peaceful coexistence and national liberation movements appear to support the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, their implementation of these attitudes indicates the contrary. Under the guise of peaceful coexistence and support of the right to self-determination, the Soviets plan to continue furthering their national objectives to spread communism throughout the world. They extend their foreign policies by applying concepts of aggression in order to implement Lenin's principle of fostering wars of national liberation without becoming involved.



## INTRODUCTION

In his January 18, 1965, Message to Congress relative to the state of national defense, the President of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson said,

It is imperative that our men in uniform have the necessary background and training to keep up with the complexities of the everchanging military, political, and technical problems they face each day.

The technical problems can be at least partially mastered since they are readily susceptible to appropriate instruction, training, practice and experience. However, in these times, it is becoming increasingly difficult to completely separate the political and military problems resulting from the policies and objectives of the principal nations of the world.

One important facet of these policies and objectives which face the military planners of today is that of aggression. Aggression can take many forms, can consist of many actions ranging from an overt use of armed force to a subtle, unheralded, small scale action to establish a Communist cell or organization within a country. Consequently, aggression defies compact definition. Nonetheless, it is important to understand the basic principles and philosophies underlying the Communist use of this tool in furthering their aims to spread communism throughout the world.

It is the purpose of this essay to investigate the Soviet concept of aggression as derived from Leninism, and to suggest that aggression is one of the important aspects of foreign policies of the USSR.

## STATUS OF AGGRESSION

As mentioned earlier, aggression cannot be completely defined. Notwithstanding this, much has been said internationally with respect to this subject. The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations establishes that the original signatories had combined their efforts to agree to the precepts of this Charter and to establish the organization of the United Nations. The very First Article of this Charter points out that the purposes of the United Nations include ". . . the suppression of actions of aggression . . ." and "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples . . . ." Article 38 of the same Charter specifies that "The Security Council shall determine the existence of any . . . act of aggression . . . ." Thus a noble purpose established by the Preamble and Article 1 becomes subject to interpretation by members of the Security Council, a permanent member of which is the Soviet Union.

The United Nations has struggled since its inception to arrive at a universally acceptable definition of aggression, but to date, has not succeeded. As a result, the international attitude towards this subject is usually clouded by uncertainties and colored by the interests of the parties involved in a particular situation. For example, the labeling of the Communist invasion of South Korea as an aggression by the Security Council and the United Nations was successful only because the Soviet delegates had earlier "walked out" on related discussions.

Through World War II, acts of aggression generally fell within the broad definition of one state carrying on hostilities in violation of previously incurred international obligations. These acts of aggression involving the overt use of armed power are certainly recognized as such whenever they occur. Other acts of aggression are not as readily perceived. Nonetheless, there are some characteristics which are common to all such acts. The aggressor nation has generally been controlled by a single, all-powerful political element. It has an overwhelming balance of military power compared to the intended victim. The aggressions would be precipitated by some incident used by the hostile nation as justification to launch its attack. A new factor has been added. The application of aggression in today's world has the purpose of exercising one nation's policies and objectives against those of another nation with the intent of avoiding direct, military confrontations. This form is not as well defined.

The ill-defined forms of aggression are those which are of the greatest concern in modern times. It is necessary to achieve a firm grasp of the basic fundamentals of the Soviet strategy in the application of aggression in order to better understand the threat and to be better prepared to cope with it.

### LENINISM

The scope of this essay permits only a narrow overview of some principles of Leninism. Those that will be considered can be logically viewed as principles which underly the basic fundamentals of that portion of Soviet strategy applicable to aggression. In considering



the principles of Leninism, it is also important to note the time frame within which they were originally conceived. Lenin was faced with problems different from those facing contemporary Communist leaders. His was a new nation, the first practical opportunity for Communists to practice what they had been preaching since the Communist Manifesto of 1848. Thus the capitalists and the bourgeoisie--the targets of Leninist attacks--and the proletariat--the victims of the capitalists and the bourgeoisie--are not necessarily the same actors on the modern stage. In modern times, the villains are the imperialists of the West and the victims are the suppressed peoples denied their rights to self-determination. Although the actors may be different, the principles are still the same.

The Soviet Union is now a large, powerful nation and is no longer fearful for its very existence as it was during the early years of Communist rule. Consequently, the specific objectives of their policies are stated in different terms, although the fundamental objective of the worldwide spread of communism remains the same.

The basic principles of Leninism from which the Soviet strategy of aggression can be derived are Lenin's attitudes toward wars, negotiations, the principle of association, peaceful coexistence, and national liberation movements. It appears sound to consider the first three initially and then proceed to the latter two which are the primary tenets of contemporary Soviet strategy. It should be emphasized that these Leninist principles underly to a great extent the tactics practiced by modern Communist leadership.



### ON WARS

Lenin maintained that all wars by non-Communist nations were unjust wars since such were the result of class struggles revealing the desires of an exploiting class. Conversely, he averred that wars involving the Soviet Union had to be "just" wars since classes and class struggle had been abolished and it was impossible to fight other than a just war.

The Soviets rationalize their preparation for war as being necessary in order to defend themselves against aggression. They state that their entire training and preparation is designed to preserve peace, to assist in the assertion of equal rights, and to respect the independence and sovereignty of all countries and peoples. Thus, their cause is a just cause being implemented in the face of an unjust threat posed by the Western imperialists.

### ON NEGOTIATIONS

Lenin maintained that negotiations and politics were simply forms of strategy. His sole criterion for successful politics was victory. The successful accomplishment of an objective was the sole end to be sought by any means. The only crime would be hesitation in carrying through a program. He insisted that scruples must be eliminated during negotiations. Concessions had no place in the Soviet scheme of negotiations. Negotiations should be a simple confirmation of an existing situation. Concessions should be unnecessary since they might be a needless surrender.

To the West, negotiations hopefully provide a vehicle to lessen world tension. To the Soviets, they are tools simply to gain time to prepare for the next show of strength. During an "aggression," their position is that the side most eager to approach the conference table is at a disadvantage with respect to the other. The aggressor can use time gained through delaying tactics to gain advantages.

#### PRINCIPLE OF ASSOCIATION

The Lenin attitude towards association well illustrates his philosophy that the end justifies the means. He preached the concept that when attacking any enemy, it was always best to associate with an element already in conflict with the foe, regardless of whether that element's cause is in sympathy with the Communist goals. The cause could be a nonviolent discontent manifested by a minority within a sovereign state. It could be a dissatisfied minority in one state ethnically related to a neighboring nation. Certainly it could be an armed conflict type of insurgency. The types of situations are numerous.

Basically, the association principle properly implemented can give the Communist powers a ready entry into situations that not only serve their purposes but could do so with a measure of sympathetic attitude from other nations. The Communists could assume the role of big brother to the victimized element (victimized from their perspective). If the objective of the element being assisted was in consonance with that of the Communists, then the mission of the latter

would be readily completed. If their objectives differ, then the Communists could place individuals, cadres or groups, into key slots enabling them to win in the end. This would assume, of course, that the conflict, peaceful or otherwise, is not successfully suppressed by the sovereign state or the Free World.

#### PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Lenin first broached the theme of Peaceful Coexistence in 1917. At that time, he was using this principle as a tactic to gain time and the opportunity to gain strength when faced with the overwhelming might of the German forces. Since he maintained that war between the capitalist nations and the Communists was inevitable, his principle was designed to provide breathing spells whenever it appeared that such were to the advantage of the Soviet Union. Being a shrewd politician, he realized that the Western countries would generally be in favor of peace without looking too far into the future to deduce the real intent of the Communist leaders.

Khrushchev, in the mid-1950's restated the principle of peaceful coexistence; however, he pointed out that wars were no longer inevitable between Communist and capitalist powers. He also stated that whether a nation liked it or not, all nations live on the same planet and must learn to live with each other.

In arriving at these principles, the Soviets philosophized that only two courses of action were open during relations between nations--total war or peaceful coexistence. The question may be



asked, "Is this different from Lenin's philosophy?" It is suggested that the answer is "No." Why? By the end of the 1950's the Communists realized that the United States possessed an overwhelming nuclear strike capability. Therefore, faced with a force which could readily annihilate them, the Soviets, in a traditional Leninist approach to the problem, are in all likelihood using peaceful coexistence to gain time and to strengthen themselves to achieve a superiority over the Western nations, particularly the United States.

Peaceful coexistence, on the surface, implies no intervention in the internal affairs of nations, and that a peaceful competition for the purposes of satisfying the needs of man can be developed. It has also been stated that the peaceful coexistence of capitalist and Communist nations becomes an absolute necessity for the development of human society.

An analysis of Soviet interpretations shows that through a characteristic "twist-about," the Russians proceed from a peaceful competition as outlined above to a situation wherein the free countries are accused of preventing the achievement of peaceful coexistence. How? The Free World is severely criticized for blocking the path of nations to communism. Therefore, according to Soviet reasoning, it is the West which is refusing to peacefully coexist, not the USSR. It is the West which is performing acts of aggression against the freedom-loving peoples of the East.

While attempting to lull the western world with their peaceful coexistence lullaby, the Soviets continue their efforts to spread

communism. However, their techniques are not overt to the degree that military confrontations with the capitalist nations becomes a part of their plans. Continuing their accusations of the western powers refusal to permit peaceful coexistence, the Communists continue to denounce the capitalist countries as the only threat of aggression and the only source of oppression of peace-loving peoples who are seeking self-determination.

#### NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS

Closely coupled to and identified with peaceful coexistence is the Soviet stated support for national liberation movements. They maintain that wars of national liberation are "just" wars and thus worthy of their support. Included in their interpretations are the struggles of the oppressed masses to free themselves from the yokes of colonialism and western imperialism. Colonialism is rapidly becoming an obsolete situation. More and more new nations are emerging; nations which were formerly colonies of one power or another. Nonetheless, the Communist theme insists that capitalist imperialism and attempts at colonialism are evidenced by any aid or by any assistance furnished by western nations to any emerging nation.

The Soviet rationalizations further set the scene for many "just" wars of national liberation. The western assistance is viewed by the Russians as aggression against the struggling, oppressed minorities, especially when these minorities are engaged in an insurrection against the legal government of a nation, next on the target list of Communist

expansion, which is receiving this aid. The assisting nations are vehemently accused of desiring to further their imperialist aims and of continuing the suppressing of the right of people to self-determination.

#### AN ANALYSIS

On the surface the Soviets generally subscribe to the philosophies enumerated in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, i.e., to suppress aggression and to respect the principle of self-determination of peoples. However, their interpretations of these principles and certainly their implementation of objectives derived therefrom are markedly different from those of the Free World. As a result there is a definite threat to world peace. This threat is not likely to manifest itself as a global war, unless a serious blunder or gross political miscalculation occurs on the part of the United States or Russia. This possibility must, of course, be allowed for and definite countermeasures proposed and implemented which are currently evidenced by the defense posture of the United States.

In keeping with Lenin's original principle of peaceful coexistence, it should be realized that the present Communist theme on the same subject could well be a delaying action in order to gain an upper hand in the near future. One of the basic Communist principles is to avoid an overt use of aggressive force unless it is the only course of action open to them. Furthermore, they are not likely to use violence directly unless assured of a quick victory and one that is



without significant Free World reaction. As a result, during their delaying action, the Soviets will use any and all nonviolent means to achieve their ends.

Certainly, one of the means which could be employed, if not already employed by the Russians, is to use covert aggression to achieve their objectives. This aggression is unlike the concepts that are familiar to the general public, e.g., those propagated by Hitler, Mussolini, et al. This covert aggression can take many forms--political, ideological, subversive activities and actions by proxy. The forms likely to be encountered are continually changing and evolving as time passes. The forceful and physical type of aggression as initiated by the Nazi Government, brings immediate results and, if successfully maintained, can produce marked changes in world culture and political structure. More effective and more lasting, however, are the slow, indirect aggressions, usually carried on initially by subversive means. This type is effective because it can cut into the heart of the victim peoples. Their national heritage can be systematically destroyed. Their moral resistance can be stretched to the breaking point. Their sense of values can be distorted. They become ripe for an all-out Communist takeover.

The overt aggression of the type that occurred during the second quarter of this century is recognizable and there are mechanisms to effectively counter them. It must be realized that the Free World is facing and will continue to be facing threats of other types of aggression. These are the threats that must be recognized. The United

States is aware of the Soviet strategies of peaceful coexistence and support of national liberation movements. The United States is also experienced in dealing with and analyzing Soviet interpretations of stated internal and external policies and objectives. Therefore, the United States should be forewarned as to possible future Communist intentions.

The Soviets are not hesitant in announcing their intentions to spread socialism, their promises to support peoples' rights to self-determination and even their designations of future areas where peoples' rights must be restored according to Soviet blueprints. Based on this, it would seem that future areas of aggression might be predictable. Patterns have been established. For example, there seems to be indications that aggressions will not take place against a country which has a mutual defense pact with the United States. A proper show of force timely presented, as during the recent Cuban crisis and the Quemoy Straits crisis, is something the Communists fear and respect.

The incremental threat is readily understandable. What must be completely understood is that aggression can be successfully used as a continuation of Communist national policies. Aggression constitutes a special form of foreign policy extension. It comes complete with its own rules (which are continually changing), its own highly developed techniques for implementation, and a political philosophy of its very own--one that contains absolutely no scruples, one in which the end justifies the means. It becomes a prime vehicle

for implementing Lenin's principle of fostering wars of national liberation without becoming involved.

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